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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a proposed five-phase model for assessing the instructional leadership of rural school administrators. In phase one, assessors conduct a structured interview to determine participants' understanding of the skills and functions required of the instructional leader. Phase two allows participants to review and evaluate video tapes about teacher instruction and lesson plans, curriculum guides, and examinations. Participants submit written reports of their evaluation components. Assessors note participants' instructional management and curriculum auditing skills, and review their reports. In phase three, participants develop plans to address the problems they identified in phase two. Assessors review the plans for the following concepts: planning, empowerment and delegation, improvement of instruction, recognizing quality teaching, monitoring, environment, and providing visibility and incentives. Phase four requires participants to formally present and defend their plans developed in phase three. In phase five, participants receive information concerning their performance. The aim of this model is to assist rural school administrators in becoming effective instructional leaders by identifying areas of strength and of needed professional development. After developers complete their testing and refining of the assessment model, they expect to make training guidelines available. This model is not intended for evaluation purposes in the selection of school administrators. The paper includes a 44-item bibliography on instructional leadership. (LP)

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ASSESSING THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER OF RURAL SCHOOLS

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ASSESSING THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER OF RURAL SCHOOLS

Instructional leadership is associated with the decisive skills required of principals or school administrators for school effectiveness. This is particularly true for the rural school administrator who is responsible for all facets of education in the rural district. Student achievement and teaching success are based on the academic leadership of the principal as related to goal setting, managing curriculum and instruction, supervision and evaluating teaching, providing staff development, managing resources, and promoting a positive climate and expectations for success. (Daresh & Ching-Jan, 1985; Duke, 1987; Hallinger, Murphy, Weil, Mesa, & Mitman, 1983; Murphy, Weil, Hallinger, & Mitman, 1982; Stallings & Mohlman, 1981; Short & Spencer, 1990). Research indicates the skills and qualities the instructional leader should have, but research is lacking in how these skills and qualities are to be assessed. Hoyle, English, and Steffy (1985) identify seven skills for instructional management and discuss the concepts for assessing teacher effectiveness, student achievement, and curriculum delivery. Methodology for assessment of instructional leaders is lacking, especially as related to the rural school administrator. A five-phase model of assessment for instructional leadership of rural school administrators has been developed and is being evaluated for effectiveness.

The concepts of the model of assessment for instructional leadership include the following components:

1. Interview: determine personal skills and for orientation;
2. Assessment of instructional management skills integration and curriculum auditing skills;
3. Assessment of strategic planning and empowerment skills;
4. Interview: analysis of instructional management skills and planning components;
5. Feedback and professional growth development facets.

These modules evaluate the skills of the participants being assessed for the fundamental job functions or dimensions related to instructional leadership. The feedback from the assessment process will provide the school administrator for rural schools the opportunity to develop an individualized professional growth plan to enhance the skills of instructional leadership and to provide for quality academic programs.

The presentation provides a description of the model and current research in progress for evaluation of the model to assess instructional leadership. Theoretical concepts of the model are justified by research on skills of the instructional leader and effective schools. Only through effective "assessment" can one determine the "richness of the goldmine" to determine the choices of action for quality rural education.

School effectiveness is associated with the principal as the instructional leader (DeBevoise, 1984; Duke, 1987; Kroeze, 1984). Effective schools research by Edmonds (1979) and effective teaching research by Roshenshine (1983), Hunter (1984), Good and Brophy (1984) provide insight to the relationship of student achievement and the principal's position to be an instructional leader. If the principal's role is to enhance school effectiveness or as identified in the educational reform act in Kentucky to be effective on out-comes based performance and assessment, then preparatory programs for principals or any educational administrator should measure the instructional leadership skills of program participants prior to recommending them for certification.

Research indicates the skills and qualities the instructional leader should have, but research is lacking in how these skills and qualities are to be assessed. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (1984) identified five principal variables as essential to effective schools: (a) a vision of where the school is, where it is going, and communicating it to all populations involved; (b) establishing an educational environment for students, faculty and staff; (c) understanding the curriculum needs of a school/district, establishing and maintaining the curriculum as related to school goals; (d) recognizing quality teaching and having the ability to work with teachers to improve instruction; and (e) monitoring school performance--teachers, students, and administration. Blumberg

and Greenfield (1980) recognize similar skills for the effective principal. Hoyle, English, and Steffy (1985) identify seven skills for instructional management and discuss the concepts for assessing teacher effectiveness, student achievement, and curriculum delivery.

Hallinger (1985) in the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) used fifty statements about principal instructional leadership behaviors. These behaviors relate to ten job functions or dimensions for instructional leadership: (a) framing goals, (b) communicating goals, (c) supervising and evaluating instruction, (d) coordinating curriculum, (e) monitoring progress, (f) protecting instructional time, (g) maintains high visibility, (h) providing incentives to teachers, (i) selecting and participating in professional development programs, and (j) providing incentives for learning (Hallinger et al., 1987; Short & Spencer, 1990).

Behrens (1989) stated that leadership and effective schools is related to "vision" where principals or top school administrators create a vision of the organization and a sense of purpose. This vision or purpose must be communicated before a dream may become a reality. In addition to vision leaders must be able to establish values, reflect, articulate, plan, and take action. Instructional leaders are willing to "stick your neck out" and take risks.

Smith and Andrews (1989) present four categories of activities as related to their definition of instructional

leader: resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence. In describing these functions, the authors indicate methods supervisors may evaluate the existence of the categories of activities by a practicing principal.

Coble (1989) stated the need for instructional leaders to be knowledgeable in curriculum audits and to use internal and external audits for effective leadership. English (1988) furnishes the aspect that the instructional leader must under the goals of the school/district, have a written curriculum, have a taught curriculum, have a tested curriculum and strives to maintain curricular quality control. Hoyle (1989) described the professional studies model for the development of superintendents and instructional leaders. Emphasis was on assessment and a combination of theory and clinical experiences.

Milstein (1990) focuses on the purposes of a clinical sequence for blending theory and practice in the preparation of school administrators. Phase five of his concepts for the development of instructional leaders associates evaluation as a key component to determine the effectiveness or potential of a student. Formative and summative evaluations are necessary to assist the student in reflection on experiences.

Heller and Pautler (1990) address the concepts of combining instructional and managerial leadership to have an effective administrator for the future. Hallinger and Murphy's (1987) work is considered to be a starting point for developing a definition of instructional leadership. Deal (1987) provides the caveat

that managerial and instructional leadership may offset the effectiveness of principals especially when related to which concept has priority. Empowerment or delegation of managerial leadership functions may be an asset to allow the principal to have a larger role in instructional improvement/leadership.

A review of literature and research on assessment concepts for instructional leadership for the individual who is completing a degree or certification program for principal or school administrator, provided little information. The National Association of Secondary School Principals has the NASSP Assessment Centers which address twelve areas. One of these concepts is leadership but the assessment process does not approach or consider skills for the instructional leader. The American Association of School Administrators has an Educational Administrator Effectiveness Profile which provides to a practicing school administrator feedback in eleven skill areas.

Behling and Champion (1984) developed an instrument for self-assessment by principals. The Principal's Instructional Leadership Self-Assessment Checklist is invaluable to practicing educators in the schools but does not provide assessment or feedback for an individual aspiring to be a principal or instructional leader. MetriTech, Inc. (1988) developed an Instructional Leadership Inventory, but this instrument is also a self-assessment by the practicing school administrator.

The only assessment concept which provides some insight into the skills for aspiring educators is the Management Profile

Analysis at Texas A & M University developed by Erlandson (1989). This is limited to management functions and does only a limited assessment on instructional leadership.

Methodology for assessment of instructional leaders is lacking, especially as related to the aspiring graduate student in educational administration programs. In addressing a need to provide assessment of instructional skills a five-phase model of assessment for instructional leadership has been conceptualized and is undergoing development for evaluation to determine effectiveness and validity. The research of the experts in the field have been incorporated in development of the model.

The concepts of the model of assessment for instructional leadership include the following phases:

PHASE ONE: INTERVIEW

This phase involves a structured interview which uses established questions, limited probing questions, to determine the participant's awareness and understanding of skills and functions of the instructional leader. Some concepts which are sought are mission, vision, communication processes, definition of instructional leader, environment, goal development, planning, strategies, action plans, trust and rapport, and empowerment. The assessor uses a profile sheet and scripting to record the participant's responses. Audio and/or video taping is considered to also be an asset for this component of the assessment process.

PHASE TWO: INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Instructional management skills are essential for the effective instructional leader. Program assessment is a key component of the management skills. This phase of the assessment model uses video tapes of teacher instruction for evaluation by the participant, copies and simulations of lesson plans, curriculum guides, and examinations which relate to topics in the lesson plans and curriculum guides. Instructions to the participant are given orally and in writing. The participant is to review the curriculum guides, the lesson plans, and the examinations/tests. The video tapes of teacher instruction are congruent with the curriculum components reviewed. Additional data is furnished concerning the school and school district providing demographics and current socio-economic conditions related to education. The participant is requested to provide a written report on the components reviewed.

The assessor(s) observe the actions of the participant, use a profile checklist reflecting specific instructional leadership skills for instructional management and curriculum auditing, and review the written report.

PHASE THREE: STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EMPOWERMENT

In phase three the participant is asked to respond by developing a plan to address the situations/problems identified in phase two on instructional management skills and program assessment. A profile analysis form is used to record the

processes the individual uses in this component. The concepts assessors are looking for include planning, empowerment/delegation, improvement of instruction, recognizing quality teaching, monitoring, environment, and providing visibility and incentives.

PHASE FOUR: PARTICIPANT'S PRESENTATION

The participant will deliver a formal presentation on the plans developed in phase three. Following the presentation the participant will be challenged and requested to defend the plan and/or to explain the facets developed and presented. The concepts identified in this component relate to the ten job functions identified by Hallinger et al (1987) and Short and Spencer (1990).

PHASE FIVE: FEEDBACK AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

This fifth phase of the model involves an interview where the participant is provided information concerning the performance on the activities in phases one through four. With the feedback process, the interviewer provides professional growth recommendations which relate to the strengths and weaknesses of the individual assessed. A written report will be provided to the participant.

These modules evaluate the skills of the participants being assessed for the fundamental job functions or dimensions related to instructional leadership. Currently, the structure interview,

profile analysis forms, and simulations are being written and refined. Some components have been tested on volunteers to determine how the instruments and questions are perceived. During the Fall of 1990, ten to fifteen rural school administators will be participating in the complete assessment model. This run through will be used to establish clarity of the process and validate some of the components. Training guidelines for others will be developed in the future. Emphasis over the next year is to test and refine the assessment model.

The assessment model for instructional leadership is a possible means to assist the development of aspiring instructional leaders as well as a model to assess current educators on instructional leadership skills. The theoretical concepts of the model are research based as indicated by the attached bibliography. With the emphasis on instructional leadership, rural school administrators are expected to perform with a higher rate of achievement than those in urban centers. One facet is the limited number of school administrators in the rural school districts and the multiple number of hats which they must wear, e.g., the many responsibilities that they must perform.

With the development and research of the model for assessing instructional leadership, rural school administrators will be able to identify strengths and areas for professional development to assist them in becoming a more effective instructional leader for education. The concepts for the model are not to be used for

evaluation purposes for selection of school administrators. The primary purpose is for professional development and growth of the instructional leader, especially during this era of educational reform.

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